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Marriage

Personality and Spiritual Gifts in Marriage



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Personality and Spiritual Gifts in Marriage

Directions: Read through the verses and information below, allowing adequate time for discussion about each topic. The material below should not be considered exhaustive; rather, it should serve as a beginning point for you to search the Scripture and to learn more about marriage.

I. SCRIPTURAL DIRECTION AND BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES.

A. Husbands and wives were created for unique roles.

A husband and wife each have a unique position and role in the Body of Christ as both individuals and as a couple. The way God created each of us helps to define our roles. We are called to live out our lives in a way that glorifies God.

1 Corinthians 12:18-20, "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body."

Ephesians 4:7, 12, "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. . . . For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:"

B. We were created to be different from one another.

Our Creator is not surprised by our differences and neither should we be. If you can view differences in your personalities as a gift rather than a threat, you will be greatly blessed in your marriage. Similarly, God has given spiritual gifts to all believers in a manner and degree as He has seen fit. Spiritual gifts vary between individuals and are intended to work together for the edification of the Body of Christ. In your marriage you have the opportunity to help each other grow and develop in a unique way based on how God has designed you.

Romans 12:6-8, "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness."

1 Corinthians 12:4-11, "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

C. We are designed to be unified by Christ.

While God designed us to be different, He also intends for our differences to fade into the background as we unite around our Head, Jesus Christ. This is true for the Body of Christ, the church, and for the two of you as a married couple.

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Romans 12:4-5, "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."

Ephesians 4:3-6, "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

Romans 15:6, "That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

D. We each have strengths and weaknesses.

Our strengths do not make God love us more and our weaknesses do not make God love us less. Rather, the combination of strengths and weaknesses that a husband and wife possess, as individuals and as a couple, are the soil in which God works in and through us. The marriage relationship allows spouses to love and accept each other for who they are.

1 Corinthians 12:12-27, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

E. We need to surrender all to God.

All that we have been given, our personality, gifts, passions, weaknesses, and abilities, are to be surrendered to God so that (1) He can redeem them from their sinful nature, and (2) He can use them to help us pursue Christ-likeness and to point others, one's spouse in particular, to Christ.

1 Peter 4:10-11, "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

2 Corinthians 4:7, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

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2 Corinthians 12:9-10, "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."

F. Dealing with differences.

Differences are inevitable in marriage. Sometimes differences lead to misunderstanding and conflict. You need to be respectful of the ways God has created you and your spouse differently. Love, kindness, humility, respect, and mutual submission are key.

Colossians 3:12-15, "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful."

Ephesians 4:32, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

1 Peter 3:8-9, "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing."

II. PRACTICAL APPLICATION

While personality can certainly impact life, a number of factors influence it. The goal in describing the types of personality features and characteristics below is to facilitate understanding and communication. The goal is not to "pigeon-hole" anyone or to give people "labels." Rather, read through the following information with the goal of better understanding how God created you and your spouse and how this information can help your marriage grow.

A. Personality and temperament.

1. What is personality?

"Personality refers to a distinctive set of traits, behavior styles, and patterns that make up our character or individuality. How we perceive the world, our attitudes, thoughts, and feelings are all part of our personality."¹ Personality is relatively consistent and enduring over time. It is a result of both predispositions that individuals are born with (i.e., temperament) and more flexible characteristics. Each one of us has personality characteristics that are generally established early in life, are long-lasting, and are difficult to change. Other personality characteristics are shaped by life experiences and may change with time.

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2. What is temperament?

Temperament can be defined as the “biologically-based individual differences in emotion, motor reactivity, and self-regulation that demonstrate consistency across situations and over time.”²

Temperament is God-given, enduring, and results from a combination of heredity, neural, and hormonal factors. These factors then affect how an individual responds to the environment. Within limits, temperament can be moderated by environmental factors, the responses of others, and personal choices. Changes in temperament occur as a matter of degree to which something is expressed. The following are nine aspects of temperament that are commonly identified in childhood and are found to endure into adulthood.³

- a. Activity level: The degree of activity a person inherently possesses; how active or passive he or she is.
- b. Predictability: The degree to which someone’s lifestyle is characterized by regular routines and functions versus being more irregular and unpredictable.
- c. Threshold of responsiveness: The intensity level of a stimulus required to get a response from someone. Some people are very “touchy” while others require significant “prodding” to get them to respond.
- d. Distractibility: How the person responds to the effects of distractions and interruptions. Some people are highly focused, while others’ minds wander easily from topic to topic. Also, some people don’t mind interruptions while others are greatly bothered when something or someone disrupts them.
- e. Persistence: The length of time an activity is pursued by an individual; especially, how long a person can continue working on an activity in the face of obstacles.
- f. Approach or withdrawal: The nature of a person’s response to new things and experiences in life (e.g., trying new things, meeting people, etc.).
- g. Adaptability: The speed and ease with which a person can “shift-gears” in response to a change in the environment or circumstances.
- h. Intensity of reaction: The amount of energy used in the expression of moods. How intensely someone expresses his emotions.
- i. Quality of mood: Positive mood (pleasant, joyful, friendly) versus negative mood (unpleasant, blue, critical).

3. Does personality change?

To want to change some aspects of your spouse’s personality or to think that it is in your power to do so is not unusual. However, generally speaking, personality is not something that you can change about

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your spouse. Rather, it is something you learn to live with and accept. Because each one's personality is such a fundamental aspect of the self, striving to change someone's personality or requesting that type of change can be interpreted as rejection.⁴

Each person's unique personality is an avenue through which God demonstrates His power and ability to bring glory to Himself. That said, it may be necessary for you or your spouse to work on growing in your ability to relate or respond to others. For example, if you are someone who normally keeps your thoughts and feelings to yourself (i.e., the personality trait called introversion), then you may need to work on growing in your ability to share your thoughts and feelings with your spouse. Conversely, trying to force an introvert to become an extrovert (someone who shares their thoughts and feelings very openly) is not a realistic expectation.

4. Personality and personal responsibility.

While personality establishes tendencies, individuals can make choices to live in a manner that is controlled by the Holy Spirit and consistent with biblical truth. Personality and temperament should not be used as an excuse for sinful or inappropriate behavior. Some aspects of your personality may make you more vulnerable to certain types of sin. For example, if you are a very verbally expressive person by nature, you may have to be more careful about gossip. This also means that sometimes each spouse will have to "stretch" and "adjust" to doing things in ways that don't necessarily feel easy or natural. Your goal should be to be fully controlled by and submitted to the Holy Spirit in all aspects of your life.

5. Do "Opposites attract," or do "Birds of a feather flock together?"

Actually, depending upon the circumstances, both statements are often true.

- a. Complementary traits: Occur when couples are opposites on a certain trait. Often, in the beginning of a relationship, these personality differences are initially loved. For example, a quiet, reserved husband may admire his wife's outgoing, uninhibited nature or a wife who examines every option before making a decision may admire her husband's spontaneity. However, over time, couples sometimes stop seeing the blessings of the opposite trait and start to try to change their spouses to be more like themselves. Unfortunately, this can lead to conflict if the spouses are not feeling understood or appreciated.
- b. Similar traits: Occur when couples are alike on a certain trait. Often, in the beginning of a relationship, these personality similarities make things go smoothly. To the degree a couple is similar, they are able to make decisions more quickly and with less conflict. However, over time couples who are similar on certain traits will need to be aware of what they may be missing. For example, if both the husband and wife tend to be reserved and keep their thoughts and feelings inside, they may not have major arguments, but they may also be avoiding having some very important discussions that they need to have.

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6. The role of birth order.⁵

Birth order is one factor that may affect how one's personality develops. The size of one's family (e.g., being an only child versus having eight siblings) clearly affects how an individual views life. One's birth order can affect one's levels of need for achievement, desire to be in charge, desire to keep peace, tendency toward personal responsibility, etc. When considering birth order, remember that not everyone "fits the mold" perfectly. There are many variations in how birth order is expressed, particularly for middle children.

B. Understanding each other is key.

1. Understanding strengthens your relationship.

Understanding your personality and the personality of your spouse is helpful in determining what roles and functions each of you will most naturally fulfill. With this information, you can make the most of your strengths and accommodate one another's weaknesses. The goal is to use each of your strengths effectively and to help each other temper the weaknesses. A thorough understanding can help you anticipate your spouse's needs and help you respect each other's different ways of dealing with life.

2. Focus on common ground.

Establishing common ground on which to build can help when dealing with differences. Focus on the similarities you share (common interests, spiritual goals, etc.) that are not related to personality differences. Then, make the most of personality differences by viewing your spouse as providing a source of refreshing perspectives or inspirational variety.⁶ When differences in your personalities come up, make efforts to listen with the purpose of understanding your spouse. Communicate clearly and respectfully. You will experience greater intimacy in your marriage if you seek to listen to, validate, and understand each other.

C. Some personality and character traits can be harmful to relationships.

1. Seek to understand what shaped one another's personality.

Spouses should seek to understand how one another's personality was shaped through life experiences. This is because the combination of one's personality with one's relationship history makes a big impact on closeness and intimacy in a marriage. Our experiences with parents, siblings, friends, coworkers, etc., all help to shape our personality and shape how we interact in relationships. These past relationships may help provide a foundation for future healthy relationships. Other times, unhealthy and maladaptive personality traits may have been developed through relationships with others. Unhealthy personality traits that have developed from unhealthy relationships need to be dealt with thoroughly so that they don't hurt your marriage and family. Sometimes seeking counsel is necessary to work through these issues. Either way, trying to understand each other's personality, temperament, relationship history, and spiritual gifts can be a healthy, growth-inspiring exercise for couples.

2. Below is a listing of traits that can be harmful to relationships. While we rarely want to talk about our weaknesses, you both need to identify the areas you need to grow in. Go through this list individually

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and together, and talk about items that describe areas that you need to work on. If you know of an area you need to work on that is not on this list, go ahead and write it in. Take time to pray together about being able to grow in overcoming these issues.

Domineering	Self-righteous	Flirtatious
Controlling	Stubborn or rigid	Envious
Impulsive	Overly dramatic	Gossiping
Unempathetic	Having to be right	Being a martyr
Dependent	Jealous/possessive	Critical/faultfinding
Quickly angry	Materialistic	Contentious
Manipulative	Insecure	Never satisfied
Undependable	Emotionally abusive	Insensitive
Perfectionistic	Physically abusive	Overly sensitive
Unreliable	Paranoid	People pleasing
Disrespectful	Moody	Self-centered
Unforgiving	Pessimistic	Other: _____

D. Spiritual gifts in marriage.

1. What are the spiritual gifts, and how many are there?

Different views exist about the various spiritual gifts, and one should not become overly dogmatic about which view is taken. Several passages of Scripture list spiritual gifts (*Romans 12:3-8*; *1 Corinthians 12:8-10*; and *Ephesians 4:7-13*) and they are implied in other passages (e.g., *Exodus 31:1-11*). Below is one possible listing of gifts.

Prophecy	Teaching	Prayer/intercession
Pastor	Discerning of Spirits	Leadership
Missionary	Knowledge	Mercy
Evangelist	Giving	Faith
Exhortation	Helps	Administration
Craftsmanship	Hospitality	Service
Wisdom	Music	

2. Each individual has been created to give God glory.

Each one has been shaped for serving God. We have been made in God's image, which means that every part of us is to be a reflection of our Creator (*Genesis 1:26-27*). However, that image is imperfect because of the presence of sin in the world. Our goal is to become more Christ-like so that He is glorified through our actions. As it says in *Matthew 5:16*, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Our desires, abilities, experience, personality, and spiritual gifts are all resources that we have that can work together in our pursuit of serving God (*Romans 15:6*).

3. The Holy Spirit has given each Believer stewardship of a spiritual gift(s).

1 Peter 4:10 says, "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." These abilities and desires are given by God for the common good of the body of Christ (see *1 Corinthians 12:4-11* and *Romans 12:4-5*). These gifts often work together with our personality. That is, one's personality may contribute to his ability to practice a spiritual gift.

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4. Spiritual gifts are not earned, deserved, or given to only “special” people.

Since these gifts are God-given, we should not compare ourselves or view others as better or worse than we are. Rather, we should seek to encourage each other to use the gifts by provoking one another to love and good works.

Romans 12:3, “For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.”

2 Corinthians 10:12, “. . . but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.”

Hebrews 10:24, “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.”

5. Recognition of spiritual gifts is not pride.

Some Christians assume that recognizing that they have a spiritual gift is the same as being proud. This is not accurate. Remember that spiritual gifts are “bestowed” by God. It does not refer to “giftedness” in the sense of some people are “special” while others are not. The spiritual gifts are God’s, not yours. Spiritual gifts are not about us. You are a steward who has been fashioned by God to serve Him.

Ephesians 2:10, “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

6. You don’t have to be better than others.

God never intended for us to have to be “the best” at something in order for us to use our gifts! There will always be someone better than you (looks, intelligence, money, strength, social skills, humor, etc.). The sooner you accept this, the sooner you can stop trying to perform up to impossible standards or to be someone you’re not and start serving God the way He created you to be.

7. Spiritual gifts are for a purpose.

When striving together as a couple to discover your individual spiritual gifts, remember that design helps reveal purpose. Therefore, take note of the way you are each designed by God with desires and abilities. Recognize that it is for a purpose. He equips us with gifts and desires that allow us to fulfill that purpose. Often, a feeling of joy and fulfillment comes when you are using your gifts. Often, where you find yourself most effective and where you find the most satisfaction and joy indicate the presence of a spiritual gift.

8. Spiritual gifts are to be used.

Spiritual gifts are to be discovered, developed, and used through participation in the Body of Christ. Prayer, exploration, consultation with others, and a reliance on God for direction and guidance are all essential components when discovering and utilizing your spiritual gifts.

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2 Timothy 1:6-7, "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

9. Using spiritual gifts leads to gratitude.

Acknowledging our place in the Body of Christ and the gifts given to each one of us cultivates gratitude for God. This gratitude leads us to desire to serve Him more fully and faithfully.

2 Corinthians 2:14, "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place."

2 Corinthians 9:15, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

10. Don't get side-tracked.

Focus on what God has asked you to do, and don't get side-tracked by focusing on what you think others should be doing.

John 21:21-22, "Peter seeing him [John] saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me."

11. Certain tasks can aid in the discovery of spiritual gifts.

- a. Desire the knowledge of spiritual gifts in general and yours in particular. Pray specifically for God to help you understand and develop the spiritual gifts that He has given you.

1 Corinthians 12:31, "But covet earnestly the best gifts . . ."

1 Corinthians 14:12, "Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church."

1 Corinthians 14:1, "Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy."

(Note: *1 Corinthians 14:3* clarifies what "prophesy" is: "But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.")

- b. Determine your gifts by reading about spiritual gifts in the Bible (for example, see *1 Corinthians 12, 13, 14*), getting feedback from those that know you well on how they see God working through you, and taking a spiritual gifts inventory.
- c. Develop your gifts by learning about them, seeking ways to use them, and getting guidance and mentoring from others.
- d. Diligently act on your knowledge, and be a good steward of the gifts that have been given to you. Actively practice your gifts for the edification of the Body of Christ.

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Colossians 3:23-24, "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ."

12. Encourage each other.

Make sure you take the opportunity to build up and encourage your spouse by pointing out the areas in which you see God working in and through him or her. Thank God for how He created your spouse and how He is empowering you to bring Him glory, serve others, and experience joy.

E. You Are S.H.A.P.E.D for serving God.⁸

Each of you has been uniquely created, gifted, and molded by God. Consider the five areas listed below and how each shapes who you are. If you submit your whole life as an offering to God, He can and will use these things to bring glory to Himself, help and encouragement to others, and joy to you.

1. **Spiritual gifts:** given to you by God to use for His glory and to strengthen the Church.
2. **Heart:** things you feel strongly about; perhaps a certain type of ministry that is particularly close to your heart (e.g., HarvestCall, working with children, etc.).
3. **Abilities:** natural talents you can use for Kingdom purposes (e.g., mathematics, music, sewing, mechanical abilities, etc.).
4. **Personality:** uniqueness in relating to others; perhaps your style of relating to others allows you to reach some people for the Lord more than others might.
5. **Experiences:** the things you have been through in life give you perspective; these experiences shape who you are and may allow you to minister to others in special ways.

III. COUPLE QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES.

A. Questions and issues for you to discuss.

1. What are the spiritual gifts that God has given you? Have you ever specifically studied spiritual gifts in the Bible? Would you be willing to search the Scriptures and pray with me so that we can help each other identify and use our spiritual gifts?
2. Fear of sounding proud, comparison with others, feelings of inferiority, and other misunderstandings about spiritual gifts leads some Christians to believe that they don't have any spiritual gifts. Does this describe you? If so, in what way? How can we work together to align our thinking about spiritual gifts with the Word?
3. How are we similar and different on the nine aspects of temperament listed in section II, A, 2? How has your temperament shaped who you are today? How might these aspects of temperament lead us to misunderstand each other?

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4. If we are unable to work through an issue related to our personality differences on our own, how would we resolve it? Who would you be willing to talk to in order to get assistance (e.g., minister, counselor, mentor, etc.)?
5. How much do you think people can change their personalities? Are there aspects of your personality you wish you could change? What is realistic?
6. What do you see as the strengths of your personality style? What are your weaknesses in this area? How can we help each other to use our strengths while learning to overcome our weaknesses?
7. How do you think your birth order has impacted how you view life? How are our birth orders similar or different? How do you think this may affect our relationship?
8. How have each of us been S.H.A.P.E.D. by God (see section II, E)? How can we encourage each other to glorify God as a result of the way God has shaped and molded our lives?

B. Couple exercises.

1. Together, read *1 Corinthians chapters 12, 13, 14* in one session. Note how the chapters relate to one another. Discuss what the text says about spiritual gifts and how it applies to your lives. Pray for opportunities to glorify God with the gifts and abilities that He has given to you.
2. Go to Appendix A and complete the “Personality Type Preferences” exercise. Together, discuss what you learned.
3. Go to Appendix B and complete the “Personality Rating Scale.” Discuss the results together.
4. Go to Appendix C and complete the exercise called “Identifying Your Social Style.” Discuss the results together.
5. A packet entitled Identifying and Developing Your Spiritual Gifts is available through Apostolic Christian Counseling and Family Services (877-370-9988 or www.accounseling.org). The packet contains a brief Bible study on spiritual gifts, a spiritual gifts inventory, and some additional tools to help you in the process of understanding spiritual gifts and your role in the Body of Christ.

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APPENDIX: INTRODUCTION

Countless theories have been developed to help understand the different personality traits and styles observed in human beings. For example, personality tests exist that categorize you as a type of animal, a character from literature, a person from the Bible, or a set of letters. Various theories break down personality into 2, 4, 16, 29 or more dimensions. Common inventories include the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Kiersey Temperament Sorter, DISC, and the NEO. While no one personality inventory is perfect or completely describes personality, some are more reputable and sound than others.

Personality inventories can be helpful in providing you with a “description” of your personality styles and how you will interact as a couple. Be aware that these inventories aren’t perfect and won’t always fit you in every case. In general, if a personality test fits you 80% or more, it’s a good match.

The following inventories in the Appendices can help you and your spouse better understand your personalities. While these inventories are simple and imperfect, completing each inventory can provide you with insight into how to understand each other more fully and lead you to further discussions.

APPENDIX A: PERSONALITY TYPE PREFERENCES ^{9,10}

Directions: Each of the following four pairs of traits describes tendencies on opposite ends of a spectrum. Read the items below and circle the numbers of the phrases that describe you. See if you score higher on one side than another. Because our preferences feel “right” to us, we sometimes can’t understand why others see things differently than we do. However, learning about our preferences and the preferences of others can help us be more understanding of others and increase effective communication. While most people tend to lean toward one side or the other of each of the pairs, in certain circumstances we have the ability to do both sides. The more strongly we lean to one side, the more comfortable and “at home” we feel there and the more difficult it is for us to understand and do the other side.

Pair 1 - Extroversion v. Introversion: Where do you get and direct your energy?

Extroverts	Introverts
According to Briggs-Myers, “People who prefer Extroversion like to focus on the outer world of people and activity. They direct their energy and attention outward and receive energy from interacting with people and from taking action.”	According to Briggs-Myers, “People who prefer Introversion like to focus on their own inner world of ideas and experiences. They direct their energy and attention inward and receive energy from reflecting on their thoughts, memories, and feelings.”
According to Tieger & Barron-Tieger, Extroverts:	According to Tieger & Barron-Tieger, Introverts:
1. Prefer being around people	1. Are comfortable spending time alone
2. Are interested in many things	2. Are selective and like to focus on one or a few things at a time
3. Have lots of friends and associates	3. Have a few very close friends
4. Jump into things pretty quickly	4. Think about things before they act
5. Tend to be talkative	5. Tend to be fairly reserved
6. Are more public and easier to get to know	6. Are more private and harder to read
7. Are enthusiastic and outgoing	7. Appear calm and self-contained

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Pair 2 - Sensing v. Intuition: Do you tend to focus on the facts or on the possibilities?

<u>Sensors</u>	<u>Intuitives</u>
According to Briggs-Myers, “People who prefer Sensing like to take in information that is real and tangible – what is actually happening. They are observant about the specifics of what is going on around them and are especially attuned to practical realities.”	According to Briggs-Myers, “People who prefer Intuition like to take in information by seeing the big picture, focusing on the relationships and connections between facts. They want to grasp patterns and are especially attuned to seeing new possibilities.”
According to Tieger & Barron-Tieger, Sensors:	According to Tieger & Barron-Tieger, Intuitives:
1. Focus on the facts and specifics	1. Focus on the possibilities
2. Are more concrete; like ideas to be practical	2. Are more abstract; like ideas and theories for their own sake
3. Trust their direct experience	3. Trust their gut instincts
4. Like to operate in the here and now	4. Like to imagine and think about the future
5. Are realistic and practical	5. Are innovative and imaginative
6. Like established ways of doing things	6. Like to create new ways of doing things
7. Think and talk in a step-by-step manner	7. Frequently jump around from topic to topic

Pair 3 - Thinking v. Feeling: Do you make decisions based on logic or feelings?

<u>Thinkers</u>	<u>Feelers</u>
According to Briggs-Myers, “People who prefer to use Thinking in decision making like to look at the logical consequences of a choice or action. They want to mentally remove themselves from the situation to examine the pros and cons objectively. They are energized by critiquing and analyzing to identify what’s wrong with something so they can solve the problem. Their goal is to find a standard or principle that will apply in similar situations.”	According to Briggs-Myers, “People who prefer to use Feeling in decision making like to consider what is important to them and to others involved. They mentally place themselves into the situation to identify with everyone so they can make a decision based on their values about honoring people. They are energized by appreciating and supporting others and look for qualities to praise. Their goal is to create harmony and treat each person as a unique individual.”
According to Tieger & Barron-Tieger, Thinkers:	According to Tieger & Barron-Tieger, Feelers:
1. Are more logical and analytical	1. Are more sensitive and sympathetic
2. Believe it’s better to be truthful than tactful	2. Believe it’s better to be tactful than truthful
3. Are fair and consistent; apply one standard to all	3. Like harmony; look for extenuating circumstances
4. Are motivated by achievements	4. Are motivated by being appreciated
5. Like to compete and win	5. Like to cooperate and create consensus
6. Easily see flaws; can be critical and brusque	6. Like to please others; express appreciation easily
7. Are thick-skinned and not easily offended	7. Get their feelings hurt more easily

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Pair 4 - Judging v. Perceiving: Do you prefer to be more planful or more spontaneous?

(Note: the term “judging,” as it is used here, is not the same thing as being judgmental.)

Judging	Perceiving
According to Briggs-Myers, “People who prefer to use their Judging process in the outer world like to live in a planned, orderly way, seeking to regulate and manage their lives. They want to make decisions, come to closure, and move on. Their lives tend to be structured and organized, and they like to have things settled. Sticking to a plan and schedule is very important to them, and they are energized by getting things done.”	According to Briggs-Myers, “People who prefer to use their Perceiving process in the outer world like to live in a flexible, spontaneous way, seeking to experience and understand life, rather than control it. Detailed plans and final decisions feel confining to them; they prefer to stay open to new information and last-minute options. They are energized by their resourcefulness in adapting to the demands of the moment.”
According to Tieger & Barron-Tieger, Judgers:	According to Tieger & Barron-Tieger, Perceivers:
1. Like to make decisions; decide quickly	1. Like to keep options open; may procrastinate
2. Prefer to make and keep plans	2. Prefer to be free to act spontaneously
3. Are usually well organized	3. Are often disorganized
4. Like to be in control	4. Like to adapt to changing situations
5. Have a strong work ethic: work, then play	5. Have a strong play ethic: play, then work
6. Are more formal and conventional	6. Are more casual and unconventional
7. Tend to see things as black or white	7. Tend to see things as shades of gray
8. Are often better at finishing projects	8. Are often better at starting projects

Sources:

- Briggs-Myers, I., *Introduction to Type (Sixth Edition)*, Mountain View, CA: CPP, 1998.
- Tieger, P., & Barron-Tieger, B., *Just Your Type*, Boston, MA: Little, Brown & Company, 2000.

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APPENDIX B: PERSONALITY RATING SCALE^{11,12,13}

Directions: Each of you rate yourself on the dimensions below. Place a mark in the box that best describes you. Be sure you make your rating based on how you view yourself and not how you wish you were or how you think someone else wants you to be. You can either answer the questions separately and then discuss them, or you can fill this out together. Note the items where you are alike and different. Discuss with your partner how your similarities and differences have already affected and could affect your relationship. There are advantages and disadvantages to both similarities and differences. How could your own similarities and differences play out in your marriage? Discuss what you can do to minimize any negative effects and maximize the positive ones.

	<i>Usually/ always like me</i>	<i>More like me</i>	<i>Both like me</i>	<i>More like me</i>	<i>Usually/ always like me</i>	
Outgoing						Shy
Dominant						Submissive
Pessimistic						Optimistic
High energy						Low energy
Impulsive						Deliberate
More logical						More emotional
Decision-maker						Indecisive
Organized						Disorganized
Leader						Follower
Formal						Casual
Easily stressed						Calm under stress
Competitive						Cooperative
Practical						Imaginative
Easily angered						Tolerant of others
Concrete						Abstract
Focus on facts						Focus on possibilities
Planned						Spontaneous
Determined						Easily defeated
Open						Distant
Modest						Arrogant
Warm						Cold
Laid back						Active/Industrious
Sympathetic						Indifferent
Excitable						Calm
Daring						Fearful
Trusting						Suspicious
Bold						Insecure
Giving						Stingy
Assertive						Passive
On time						Late
Traditional						Innovative
Perfectionist						Practical
Merciful						Just/Fair

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APPENDIX C: IDENTIFYING YOUR SOCIAL STYLE¹⁴

Directions: Circle one adjective on each line that best describes you. Even if you believe that both words describe you, try to choose one.

ASSERTIVENESS

A. High	B. Low
1. Competitive	Cooperative
2. Fast actions	Make deliberate actions
3. Risk taker	Risk avoider
4. Aggressive	Passive
5. Strong opinions	Moderate opinions
6. Take-charge attitude	Go-along attitude
7. Tend to use power	Tend to avoid using power
8. Take social initiative	Let others take social initiative
9. Make statements	Ask questions

RESPONSIVENESS

1. High	2. Low
1. Warm, approachable	Cool, independent
2. Open, impulsive	Guarded, cautious
3. Undisciplined about time	Disciplined about time
4. Use opinions	Use facts
5. Dramatic opinions/actions	Measured opinions/actions
6. Permissive, fluid attitudes	Strict, disciplined attitudes
7. Emotional decision making	Rational decision making
8. Easy to get to know	Hard to get to know
9. Expressive, subjective	Self-disciplined, objective
10. Easygoing with self, others	Demanding of self, others

Scoring: For each section, see if you circled more items in the High or Low side. Circle the heading that fits you (High or Low) for both the Assertiveness and Responsiveness sections. Using the two headings you circled, find your position on the grid below to determine your social style category. Read the description for your style on the next page.

Assertiveness

		A. High	B. Low
Responsiveness	1. High	Expressives	Amiables
	2. Low	Drivers	Analyticals

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DESCRIPTIONS OF SOCIAL STYLES

AMIABLES: Amiables value interpersonal relationships. These people try to minimize conflict and promote everyone's happiness. While some people view Amiables as accommodating and friendly, others may describe them as wishy-washy and lacking "back-bone." Amiables frequently find it difficult to say "no" and thus may be over committed or have difficulty setting limits. They can be counted on to do what will help and please others. They are people-oriented and non-aggressive.

ANALYTICALS: Analyticals are problem solvers. They like to get all the data before making a decision. Some say they are thorough, but others complain that they are slow. They have valuable conceptual skills. They ask the difficult, yet important, questions. At times, others may perceive them to be distant, cold, or unloving. They rarely, if ever, miss a deadline. If they do, they will certainly have good reasons to support the delay.

DRIVERS: Drivers want results! They love to run things and have the job done in their own way. "I'll do it myself" is a frequent motto. They can manage their time to the minute; they seem businesslike to some and to others they may appear to be threatening and unfeeling. Drivers make sure the job is done. They get impatient with long discussions about the "best way" or "the way to please everybody." They are confident in their ability, take risks, and push forward.

EXPRESSIVES: Expressives get involved with people in active, rapidly changing situations. These people are seen as socially outgoing and friendly, imaginative, and vigorous. When interacting with Expressives, some people see them as dynamic and energetic while others perceive them as egotistical. Expressives can get things going, but may sometimes settle for less than the best in order to get on to something else. They lack a tolerance for details, are highly competitive, and may need to learn to work with others in a collaborative manner.

Source: Merrill, D. & Reid, R., *Personal Styles and Effective Performance*, Radnor, PA: Chilton Book Company; 1981.

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Referencing of these materials is not meant to imply an endorsement by the Apostolic Christian Church of America of the author, publisher, or organization that created the materials.

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